

B<sup>3</sup> Background of the Invention

On page 2, please delete paragraph 6 at line 23, and replace it with the following heading:

B<sup>4</sup> Brief Description of the Drawings

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked-up version pursuant to 1.121):

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12. (Amended) A method of packaging a web comprising:
- slitting a web to form a slit web of two or more narrower webs; and
  - folding the slit web into superimposed layers by:
    - directing the slit web to a nip formed by first and second rotating reels,
    - inducing the slit web to move with the first and second rotating reels a length of a predetermined rotational angle to provide folding of the two or more narrower webs of the slit web by holding the two or more narrower webs alternatively against surfaces of the first and second rotating reels to form adjacent stacks, the narrower web of each stack having a first end and a second end, and
    - joining the ends of the two or more narrower webs together so that the two or more narrower webs form a continuous whole whose length corresponds to a

combined length of the two or more narrower webs.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of joining the ends of the two or more narrower webs comprises joining a first end of an outermost stack to a second end of an adjacent stack, whose first end is joined to a second end of a next adjacent stack, the joining process continuing until all of the webs are joined to form a continuous whole whose length corresponds to the combined length of the two or more narrower webs.

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14. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of joining the ends of the two or more narrow webs comprises joining the first ends of the two or more stacks in pairs, the pairs being formed at one end of the stacks beginning with an outermost stack, and at the other end the pairs being formed starting from the stack next to the outermost stack, the webs of the stacks forming a continuous whole whose length corresponds to the combined length of the two or more narrower webs.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of holding the two or more narrower webs alternatively against surfaces of the first and second rotating reels comprises holding the webs against the surfaces of said reels by mechanical engagement of the web by means disposed on the surfaces of said reels.

16. (Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the means comprises at least one mechanical gripper and at least one projection extending outwardly from a periphery of the first and second rotating reels.

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B 17. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of holding the two or more narrower webs comprises holding the webs against the surfaces of the first and second rotating reels by mechanical engagement of the web by suction using underpressure.

18. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the ends of the two or more narrower webs are joined by a process selected from the group consisting of sewing, taping, gluing, needling, hot sealing, ultrasound sealing, and stapling.

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Please cancel claims 19-25.

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Please add the following new claim:

26. (New) A method of packaging a web comprising:

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- (a) providing a web;
  - (b) slitting the web into two or more narrower webs;
  - (c) directing the webs to a nip formed by a first and second rotating reels;